

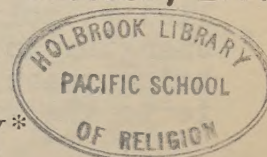
"To promote Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; to interpret the spiritual and religious values which inhere in the processes of agriculture and the relationships of rural life; to magnify and dignify the rural church; to provide a means of fellowship and cooperation among rural agencies: *Toward a Christian Rural Civilization.*"

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THE HOPE FOR WORLD DEMOCRACY*

By Henry C. Taylor

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Abraham Lincoln believed that democracy was government of the people, by the people, for the people. Under the ideal democratic government intelligent self-controlled people may have freedom of speech, equivalent economic opportunities, and freedom of movement geographically, occupationally, and socially -- limited only by personal ability and by laws formulated in the general interest.

A good citizen in a democracy is self reliant. He desires to earn his living and that of his family. He lives on a level that goes beyond the mere requirements of the law in his relations with other citizens. He is generous toward the unfortunate. A high percentage of citizens live the life of the times trying to live better in the world as it is, but as a rule have a desire to arrange for their children to take fuller advantage of educational opportunities and of economic opportunities than they themselves did in their youth.

In each generation there are a few citizens in a democracy who seek to change the form of government, the educational system, and the way of life. Fortunately the number in this class is small. Otherwise many agitators for change, in conflict with each other, might create chaos in a democracy, and a dictator might arise. A few dynamic personalities in each generation are essential to progress. It has been said of dynamic leaders, "They are the very soul

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of progress but they are a nuisance to live with." Coherent progress requires that the static minds of the rank and file hold the dynamic leaders to a safe speed and to movement in a wholesome direction.

A dynamic leader in a democracy, to serve well his country must be a good citizen of great wisdom. Otherwise he may do more harm than good. A good, dynamic leader "believes in using in a non-violent, tolerant and democratic way the forces of education, publicity, politics, economics, law and religion to direct the ever-changing and increasing power of science into channels which will bring peace and the maximum of well-being both spiritual and economic to the greatest number of human beings."

A democracy is made up of citizens with a vast range of native intelligence, education skills, physical strength, and moral fibre. In the main the forces of economic competition provide for the primary distribution of income derived from the productive activity of the people, on the basis of ability to produce. But there are always a submarginal few who are unable to provide for their own needs and who must be provided for by means of a secondary distribution of income, voluntary or through government action supported by taxation. This is an essential part of the private enterprise economy in a democracy.

Other classes of citizens are submarginal morally--the murderer, the thief, the racketeer, etc.--and have to be restrained. Freedom in a democracy is for those who are activated on acceptable levels of right relations with other citizens. Thus government in a democracy must restrain the morally submarginal as well as feed and clothe the economically submarginal. The intellectual and moral qualities of the citizens determine the extent of freedom which can exist and, in fact, determine whether democracy itself can exist.

WHERE DOES DEMOCRACY EXIST?

In Switzerland? Yes. In Western Europe the people have progressively had more to say of a political nature. England has become increasingly democratic. France and Italy are unstable republics with democratic elements in their governments. In South America, where governments often change by force of arms rather than by vote of the people, such democracy as exists is unstable. In the Orient, where half the world's population live, democracy is largely a matter of the future.

CAN DEMOCRACY EXIST WITHOUT MASS EDUCATION?

There are two approaches to democracy: from the top down and from the bottom up. Without mass education of intellectual and moral character democracy can not grow from the bottom up so that the government can be said to be by the people. Education is, of course,

in a sense from top down. It may be possible to build a government from the top down that will undertake to do for the people that which a true democracy undertakes to do. Perhaps the ten percent literacy of India may make this possible, but under these conditions, "From a Democracy to a Tyranny is an easy stage," as Plato said in The Republic.

Building from the ground up is the only sure way to stable democratic government of the people by the people. In our cooperative movement among farmers in the United States, both methods were tried--the slow method of building from the ground up and the fast method of building from the top down. The former has registered permanent success. The latter became a dictatorship and failed. To build a world democracy, world citizenship must be developed.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND 'POINT IV'

Will the U. S. technical assistance program and the U.S. Point IV program provide the basis for world democracy? These programs are focused largely on increased production to supply physical needs. More food for the hungry is their goal. What is also needed is to create a new kind of hunger, a hunger for a better education and a higher level of living--economic and spiritual.

The Point IV program, when viewed as an economic undertaking, has much in common with agricultural missionary work which has been in progress for fifty years. Unfortunately the motivations are different. Point IV is motivated by fear and the desire to keep backward countries on our side. Agricultural missionary work is based on love for mankind and carries with it the inspiration that results in the desire for a better life.

WILL UNESCO PROVIDE THE EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL BASIS FOR WORLD DEMOCRACY?

It should help, if its work is well done in the right spirit. Helping other people is no simple task. We cannot help people by doing things to them or for them. We may be helpful by working with them in the right spirit. But the difficult thing is to know enough and to be humble enough to work successfully with peoples of a different civilization. It takes time for an agricultural educator to learn how to help a peasant farmer. He has much to learn from the farmer he would teach.

A LONG TIME TASK

Much has been learned through the missionary efforts of the churches and the international Y.M.C.A. from which those in charge of the Point IV work may benefit. In the years 1931 and 1932 I had an opportunity to study agricultural missions in India and China. Some excellent agricultural work was being done in the mission centers,

but too many of the agricultural missionaries were trying to introduce American methods where they were not suitable. For example, several missionaries were trying to get Indian farmers, in areas of sparse rainfall, to use mouldboard plows, which turn the soil upside down, instead of the native digging type or plow which stirs the soil but leaves the dry top soil on top and the moist soil underneath where it can best hold its moisture.

Twenty years ago I received a letter from a young man who was serving as an instructor in an agricultural mission school in India. He had been in India one year and was discouraged. He said he had gone to India willing to devote his life to improving the conditions of living in the agricultural villages of that country but after one year's work in the school he realized that one might spend thirty years in India and not influence village life unless he learned more about Indian farming and village life than he or his associates knew. That young man desired to devote two full years to the study of Indian agriculture. This proposal was approved and financed through Agricultural Missions Inc., of New York City. That man is today the outstanding agricultural missionary. He has been a prime factor in developing a new emphasis and new methods of agricultural extension in India--a service which fits the needs of the village farmers.

Teaching people to work together in a democracy involves a great deal more than teaching them to read, write, and cipher. They may learn to debate questions at issue with keen thinking on both sides and still be remote from the democratic way of thinking and the democratic way of life.

When the natural leaders in a country learn to work together, when they are willing to participate in group thinking, that is to pool their several contributions of fact, to work together in discovering new facts pertinent to the question under consideration, and to reason together in finding the right plan of action, then the democratic process is under way. Group thinking is very different from debating. In debate each participant seeks to convert the opponent to his opinion. The dominant element is a will to conclusion, and with it the will to power. In group thinking the will to conclusion is relaxed. Patience is seeking the truth and the best line of action becomes a habit. In due course a consensus of opinion is reached, and all work together to make the plan of action effective. This is democracy in action. We use it in our local community. It is used more or less successfully in cabinet meetings in the White House and in congressional committees. Let us strive to acquire the knowledge, skill, modesty, and patience essential to work with people who are preparing themselves for participation in a democracy.

Can we hope for democratic procedures in a world organization in which many of the representatives come from dictatorships? We can hope and work. The important thing is that we should not thwart that hope by trying to dictate conclusions instead of promoting group thinking modestly and hopefully and patiently. It is

hard for Americans, in these days, to keep from feeling important. They should never exhibit that feeling in the U.N. or in any of the forms of foreign service. The man from some small country with little influence may have a better idea than our own representative. Properly conducted group thinking will let ideas be evaluated without regard to the strength of the nation of origin.

The founding fathers did not set up a democracy. They organized a republic. In that republic local issues were strong and sometimes dominant. A great debate arose. Economic issues were kept in the background while moral issues aroused the emotions of both North and South. Civil War was the result of debating instead of group thinking with patience and tolerance. Fifty years had not fully repaired the damages of that war, when a great conflict came in Europe. We then put our sword in the scales instead of our thought and our prayer. We are facing today the outcome of that effort. Peace cometh not with the sword but with the relaxing power of love.

With these background facts in mind we may hope that democracy will grow through the next few centuries, but we must not become impatient and try to force its growth by strong-arm methods. An unstable democracy is always close to becoming a dictatorship. War weakens or destroys democracy. With peace democracy may succeed if people are intellectually and morally prepared. Our effort should be to create a global climate in which democracy may thrive. Then we may hope for world democracy.

